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Communities to get project funds

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WASHINGTON -- Ramsay and Ontonagon are among communities which will benefit from provisions in the fiscal year 2004 Energy and Water Appropriations bill passed by the Senate on Tuesday.

U.S. Sens. Debbie Stabenow and Carl Levin, both D-Mich., announced that a highlight of the bill is \$2 million for the construction of a new Poe-sized Soo Lock. In addition, \$65 million was added to the Army Corps of Engineers' Operations and Maintenance budget. These funds, along with an authorization for the Corps to work with states impacted by weather-related disasters, could make funding available for the Upper Peninsula area struck by flooding this spring.

"Many of these projects are critically important in maintaining our community infrastructure and our harbors and waterways," Stabenow said. "I am pleased at the increase in funds available to the Army Corps, because this increase improves the chance that some of this money may be made available to the U.P. to rebuild from May's devastating flood. Rest assured, I will be vigorously fighting to obtain the U.P.'s share of this disaster relief funding."

"This bill provides vital funding both to help maintain Great Lakes water quality and to help communities across Michigan with their efforts to plan, monitor and restore local waterways and sewage systems," Levin said.

Levin cited the heavy May rainfall in Gogebic, Ontonagon, Baraga and Marquette counties and the severe and widespread damage which resulted. "I hope the disaster funding in this bill will help those areas to help rebuild from the damage they suffered," he said.

Ramsay Township will receive \$300,000 for planning and design analysis and construction needed in flood

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damage repairs as part of Emergency Streambank Protection.

Ontonagon will receive \$473,000 for harbor dredging, plus \$75,000 for a feasibility study in connection with the harbor.

Other U.P. beneficiaries include \$100,00 for flood damage repair to streambanks on the Sturgeon River in Baraga County; \$250,000 for a sewer project in Negaunee; \$428,000 for dredging of the Keweenaw Waterway; \$154,000 for dredging of Menominee Harbor; and \$2,410,000 for surveillance of Northern Boundary Waters.

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